



## Qwelminté – Secwepemc G2G (QS-G2G)

March 14, 2019

**Community Update:** Adams Lake Indian Band, Little Shuswap Lake Indian Band, Shuswap Indian Band, Simpcw, Skeetchestn, Splatna, and Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc

**From:** Kukpi7 Cliff Arnouse, Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Kupki7 Wayne Christian, Kukpi7 Barbara Cote, Kukpi7 Oliver Arnouse, Kukpi7 Ronald Ignace, Kukpi7 Shelly Loring

**Re:** Qwelminté- Secwepemc G2G Moving Beyond the Status Quo to Uphold a Just and Reciprocal Relationship Between 7 Secwepemc Communities and the BC Government

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As Secwepemc, we take the long view. From the arrival of the first non- Secwepemc to our territory, our Ancestors have sought to relate to others in a good way- following our Secwepemc teachings and laws. We have always planned for the very long term, making the most of each situation to ensure the health and well-being of our people, our guests, and tmicw for today and well into the future.

### *A 2013 Solution in Response to Conflict and Litigation*

The Secwepemc Reconciliation Framework Agreement of 2013 (RFA) was created in response to conflict and litigation, where, yet again, we were required to defend our Secwepemc rights and jurisdiction when it came to resource development- this time in regards to a timber license transfer. Over time, the RFA became a catchment for resource and land development questions involving 5 communities. The RFA expired in April 2018.

### *Overloading Limited Capacity and Disjointed Consultations*

It was clear that engagement through the Province of BC's current model would serve to further fragment and stress Secwepemc communities' already limited capacity. In particular, the referrals system that our communities are currently required to function under is "death by a thousand cuts", where our teams can never get ahead given the very nature of the system. This is worsened by the fact that our communities and our staff must bear the brunt of the burden of proof of our use and occupation of territory- current and historic. Terra Nullius, as stated in the 1763 Royal Proclamation, that no one owned the land prior to European assertion of sovereignty, may now be firmly refuted federal courts (R. v. Van der Peet (1996) and Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia (2014)) but it still casts a long shadow on any dealing about jurisdiction- requiring us to litigate rights that have always existed and were never extinguished.

As a Collective, we said no to continuing on with a multitude of disjointed 'consultation' processes which would pull us to a plethora of tables all purportedly working to protect, manage and take care of our territories. This does not respect our Secwepemc jurisdiction and authority, this does not recognize our decision-making institutions or uphold the BC government's responsibility to consult and cooperate through our representative institutions to obtain consent before adopting BC Government measures (UNDRIP Articles 18 & 19). This does not uphold our right to determine and develop priorities for the development and use of our lands and territories and the BC Government's responsibility to give due recognition to our laws, traditions and customs and land tenure systems through our representative institutions (UNDRIP Article 27 & 32).

## Moving Forward in 2019- Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G

When the Secwepemc Reconciliation Framework Agreement of 2013 ended in April of 2018, the 5 signatories to that agreement were determined to do our utmost to ensure that it would no longer be business as usual. Leadership from 7 communities (Adams Lake Indian Band, Little Shuswap Lake Indian Band, Shuswap Indian Band, Simpcw, Skeetchestn, Splatsin, and Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc), along with their Aboriginal Rights and Title and Natural Resource technicians have been working with the BC Government to move forward in a different way via the Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G.

Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G's roots and foundation are built upon the Secwepemc Laws which were given to us by coyote and are laid out in our oral histories and songs. As caretakers of Secwepemcúlecw, we look after everything below, everything on, and everything above our Mother earth. This includes the water world, the sky world and fires and our cultural heritage. In keeping with what our Ancestors laid out in the 1910 Sir Wilfred Laurier Memorial, we will uphold a just and reciprocal relationship with the Government to benefit generations to come.

## What Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G is

A Collective of 7 signatories from three historic divisions of the Secwepemc Nation, working collaboratively and committed to engaging across a spectrum of land and resource (*Tmicw*).

Adams Lake Indian Band	Simpcw First Nation	Skeetchestn
Little Shuswap Lake Indian Band	Splatsin	Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc
Shuswap Indian Band		(collectively Stk'emlúpsemc te Secwepemc)

As a hub of leadership and technical expertise, we are strengthened by the collective wisdom of our representatives. We share knowledge and facilitates in-depth dialogue. We offer insight to each other as well as the Province of BC on what has worked and what has not. We are focused on ensuring informed decision- making for the Secwepemc signatories.

## What Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G is NOT

Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G Group is **NOT the final decision maker**. Albeit that leadership and technicians from each of the Secwepemc signatories are actively part of Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G, it is the signatories who **ratify the decisions through their respective governance structures**.

## With Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G

In supporting Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G, the Province of BC can engage with the Secwepemc signatories across a spectrum of land and resource (*Tmicw*) issues that improve the Secwepemc economy and G2G relationships and fulfill legal obligations.

Together with Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G, the Province of BC (through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development) can make sustained, substantive progress towards:

- Development of a shared path to a long-term reconciliation agreement to advance the Parties' interests in a true G2G relationship, based on the shared goal to reconcile their respective jurisdictions, governance, laws, values and responsibilities;
- Reduced conflict over lands and resources by collaboratively developing structures and processes that can facilitate consensus seeking outcomes reflecting the principle of free, prior, and informed consent under the UNDRIP, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and the Supreme Court of Canada's *Tsilhqot'in* decision and other case law;

- Support for the Secwepemc with the practical challenges of building law and land management capacity with the goal of enabling a self-determined governance; and
- Elimination of the socio-economic gap faced by the Secwepemc, and securing a central role for the Secwepemc as partners in the regional economy by developing a new fiscal relationship between the Secwepemc and the Province.

**Without Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G**

Without Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G, there would be the status quo of dealing with under-resourced Secwepemc communities one-on-one. There would not be any efficiencies around knowledge and resource sharing. The collective wisdom as well as capacity- building of skills and understanding between the Secwepemc signatories and the Province of BC would not take place.

**Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G -- Watershed Management Approach**

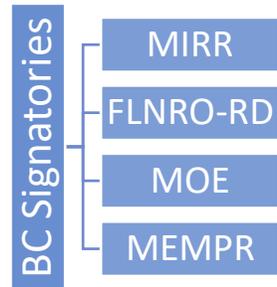
Since the time of contact, we have dealt with how to have our values and world view respected by non-Indigenous people. How do we get representatives of the BC Government, to understand and embrace our Secwepemc perspective as caretakers of Secwepemcúlecw? When water is placed at the centre of all of our planning through a watershed management perspective, this scientific approach brings to light our perspective of “all my relations”, how everything interrelates and affects each other. Water ways and watersheds are a finite resource that must be managed with care. What goes on upstream will affect what happens downstream- this is a straightforward fact that seems to be fragmented in all resource development and land use considerations. When watersheds are placed at the centre of our planning, it breaks down the silos between projects/ industries/ministries. As soon as water is a central consideration, aspects such as cumulative impacts of multiple projects can no longer be ignored. We therefore are choosing to honour our Ancestors teaching of managing for future generations well-being by placing water at the centre of Qwelmínte te Secwepemc G2G.



Next Steps for Qwelmínte- Secwepemc G2G



On March 14, 2019, Qwelmínte te Secwepemc G2G and the BC Government signed a Letter of Commitment (LoC). The LoC signifies a mutual commitment to a shared goal of achieving true and lasting reconciliation between the Qwelmínte te Secwepemc communities and the BC Government.



The story "Sku7pecen and Sk'elép" (porcupine and coyote)<sup>1</sup> and the "Sku7pecen" song were performed as a way to highlight Secwepemc way of life and responsibilities.

In the coming months, Qwelmínte te Secwepemc G2G will be working with the BC Government to develop a terms of reference as well as a workplan. We will be examining research and evidence of what areas need to be prioritized. We will also be working with Secwepemc leadership and technicians to develop a knowledge network from our communities to compliment the western science research and evidence.

*Secwepemc Kukpi7 & BC Ministers [Leadership Table] and Senior Council members in attendance at the March 14, 2019 Letter of Commitment Signing*



<sup>1</sup> Sku7pecen & Skelep telling: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/h7vtzryuvo2p992/Re%20Sk%20C3%BA7pecen%20re%20Stsept%20C3%A9kwlls%20%28The%20Story%20of%20Porcupine%29.pdf?dl=0>